

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated 15 March 2004, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the following remarks. Claims 1-25 are pending in the application. Claims 1-6 and 16-25 are rejected, and claims 7-15 are subject to a restriction requirement. Claims 7-15 will be canceled and claims 21-24 will be amended upon entry of the present amendment. No new matter has been added.

Affirmation of Election

Restriction to one of the following claim groups was required:

- I. Claims 1-6, 16-20, and 21-25, drawn to methods.
- II. Claims 7-10, drawn to a computer-implemented method.
- III. Claims 11-15, drawn to a computer-implemented method.

As provisionally elected by Applicant's representative, Ann McCrackin, on 8 March 2004, Applicant elects to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-6, 16-20, and 21-25. The non-elected claims 7-15 are canceled herein. Applicant reserves the right to later file continuations or divisions having the non-elected claims.

Information Disclosure Statement

The Office Action referred to Wehbeh, and Applicant has submitted Wehbeh with an Information Disclosure Statement herewith. Applicant notes that since van Genderen was cited in the Office Action as being considered by the Examiner, and is now of record, it is not necessary for Applicant to submit van Genderen in an Information Disclosure Statement.

Rejections of Claims Under §101

Claims 21-25 were rejected under 35 USC § 101. Applicant respectfully traverses.

Claim 21 will be amended upon entry of the present amendment to recite "*during a computerized operation of the simulator*" which further expresses the interrelationship between a computer and the data structure that permits the functionality of the data structure to be

realized. MPEP 2106.IV.B.1(a). Applicant respectfully submits that amended claim 21 recites statutory subject matter.

Claims 22-25 are dependent on claim 21, and recite further features with respect to claim 21. For reasons analogous to those stated above, and the further features in the claims, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 22-25 recite statutory subject matter.

Rejections of Claims Under §102

Claims 1-6 and 16-25 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Smith (IEEE 39th Midwest Symposium on Circuits and Systems, Vol. 1, pp. 402-405 (August 1996)). Applicant respectfully traverses.

Smith describes an interactive switch-level simulator that allows a designer to set inputs, then displays the results on the nodes of a layout for the designer to see. Smith, page 402, column 1. The “user can force nodes either high (1) or low (0).” Smith, page 403, column 1. “Node name and geometry are kept in a node table.” Smith, page 404, column 1. The Office Action calls the node name and geometry of Smith “attributes.” Office Action, page 5. In the simulation of Smith, initially an X is painted on all the nodes except power and ground, then the user “sets the value on input nodes to one or zero.” Smith, page 404, column 1. In Smith, there does not appear to be a responsive connection between what the Office Action calls the attributes of Smith and the user setting a node to 0 or 1. Office Action, page 5.

Smith does not show “*conditionally treating an unknown state of an input node on the simulation model as a known state*” responsive to “*accessing an attribute on a simulation model*” as recited in claim 1. Smith does not show such a responsive connection between what the Office Action calls the attributes of Smith and the user setting a node to 0 or 1. Office Action, page 5.

Applicant respectfully submits that Smith does not show all of the features recited in claim 1, and that claim 1 is in condition for allowance. Claims 2-6 are dependent on claim 1, and recite further features with respect to claim 1. For reasons analogous to those stated above, and the further features in the claims, Applicant respectfully submits that Smith does not show all of the features recited in claims 2-6, and that claims 2-6 are in condition for allowance.

Claims 16-25 recite features similar to those recited in claim 1. For reasons analogous to those stated above, and the features in the claims, the applicant respectfully submits that Smith does not show all of the features recited in claims 16-25, and that claims 16-25 are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance, and such action is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is invited to telephone the below-signed attorney at 612-373-6973 to discuss any questions which may remain with respect to the present application.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0743.

Respectfully submitted,

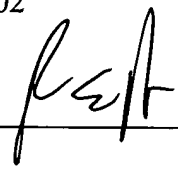
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Date 15 JUNE 2004

By Robert E. Mates
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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: MS Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 15 day of June 2004.

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Name

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Signature